

Message Text

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47

ACTION EUR-12

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R 171114Z MAY 76

FM AMCONSUL BELFAST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1298

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USNAVCOMMSTA LONDON DERRY

UNCLAS BELFAST 183

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, UK, EI

SUBJECT: WEEKEND VIOLENCE KILLS ELEVEN

1. ELEVEN MEN KILLED AND ALMOST 50 PEOPLE INJURED IN NORTHERN IRELAND VIOLENCE MAY 15 AND 16. FIVE MEMBERS OF ROYAL ULSTER CONSTABULARY (RUC) AND RUC RESERVE DIED. THREE WERE VICTIMS BOOBY TRAP EXPLOSION NEAR BORDER IN COUNTY FERMANAGH, ONE DIED IN AMBUSH AT WARRENPOINT AND ONE SHOT DOWN AT HIS HOME COUNTY TYRONE. SIX CIVILIANS DIED, FIVE IN BOMB AND SHOOTING ATTACKS ON CATHOLIC-OWNED PUBS IN BELFAST AND COUNTY TYRONE AND ONE PROTESTANT SHOT DOWN ON SIDEWALK IN ARDOYNE. AT LEAST SOME OF PUB ATTACKS SEEN AS RETALIATION BY PROTESTANT TERRORISTS FOR WHAT GENERALLY ASSUMED TO BE PROVISIONAL IRA ATTACKS ON POLICE. MOST OF THOSE INJURED INCLUDING WOMEN AND CHILDREN WERE CUSTOMERS AT BARS OR PASSING BY AT TIME OF BLASTS. ONE BOMBING IN DOWNTOWN BELFAST MAY 15 PROVOKED SMALL RIOT BETWEEN FALLS AND SHANKILL ROADS. DEATH TOLL SO FAR THIS YEAR 123 COMPARED TO 125 FOR SAME PERIOD IN 1972, THE BLOODIEST YEAR OF THE TROUBLES.

2. MOTIVES FOR PROVISIONAL IRA ATTACKS ON POLICE OBSCURE AS USUAL. RATIONALLY IT SEEMS THAT CURRENT GOVERNMENT INTENTIONS TO FOSTER "PRIMACY OF POLICE" AND REDUCE TROOP PRESENCE WOULD

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FIT INTO PROVISIONAL STRATEGY. RECENT ATTACKS AND ASSASSINATIONS

DEMONSTRATE ONLY THAT POLICE ARE NOT EQUIPPED FOR OR CAPABLE OF
ASSUMING MILITARY ROLE. IT POSSIBLE THAT PROVISIONAL IRA NOW
PURSUING LOGIC THAT ATTACKS ON LIGHTLY-ARMED ULSTER POLICEMAN
MORE EFFECTIVE IN PROVOKING SECTARIAN RETALIATION THAN ATTACKS
ON SOLDIERS (IT IS ALSO SAFER TACTIC FOR PROVISIONALS). THIS
THEORY IS HELD BY THOSE WHO BELIEVE PROVISIONALS WANT A CIVIL
WAR IN NORTHERN IRELAND.
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